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1909

Small Things Antique



By

*Mary
Saltonstall
Parker*



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Book A 6 S 6

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SMALL
THINGS
ANTIQUE

By

MARY SALTONSTALL PARKER

AUTHOR OF

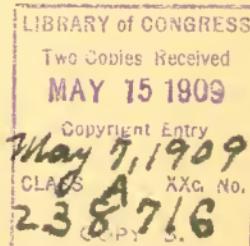
At the Squire's in Old Salem
Salem Scrap Book
Rules for Salad, in rhyme
A Baker's Dozen of Charades,
Etc.



Salem, Massachusetts
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The Yellow Mug.

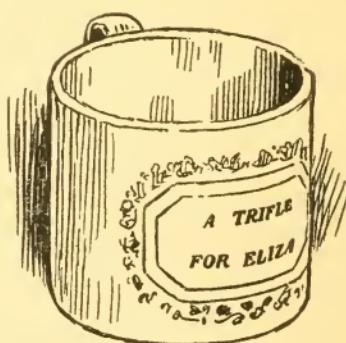
Oft, my imagination feeds
Upon a mug of yellow Leeds,
It bears four printed words in black,
Sure, naught of sentiment they smack,
Perchance some teacher or adviser
Bestowed this trifle on Eliza.

No record of a child's good deeds,
Blazoned upon the mug one reads,
No mention that for duties done,
Or perfect tasks the prize was won ;
For growing saintlier, or wiser,
But just "A Trifle for Eliza."

By it a parent may have sought,
To show his love, yet felt he ought,
To add no laudatory verse,
No budding virtues to rehearse,
Simply a present to surprise her,
A birthday gift for young Eliza.

Perhaps some swain who'd tried the power
In vain, of prayer and song and flower,
Presented to his wearied fair
This mug, and conquered then and there,
At last, because of words a miser,
He gained the day with dear Eliza.

Her history lost, let's recollect
Whoe'er she was, we must respect,
'Twixt giver and herself a bond
Of friendship or affection fond,
Then do not venture to despise her,
Or smile at this unknown Eliza.



Badges.

1850.

A satin badge of oblong shape
Surmounted by a knot of crape,
Made, when a nation had to mourn,
From Presidential office torn.
It's chief, presents his face, beneath
A star, and sword, and laurel wreath.
That hero snatched from peril's jaws
Time and again, in bloody wars,
Laid low, by an imprudent diet
Could not recover, conquered by it.

1840.

Two badges tied with pink and blue
Instruct the people what to do,
In language strong, and lurid print
At national collapse they hint.
Unless they, to avert this fate
Choose the "Log Cabin Candidate—"
Thus steering in the right direction
The voters for the next election.

Warming Pans.

Once to Lord Timothy, of Newb'ryport
Some wags proposed ('twas only meant in
sport),
With warming pans of brass and copper, he
A ship should load, bound for the Southern Sea.
The man, a little simple, saw no fun,
He liked the plan, accordingly 'twas done.
With this strange cargo weighted down, the ship
Made to some isle uncivilized, her trip.

Down to the beach, the swarming natives ran
Each bargained for a glittering warming pan,
Their shimmering beauty pleased the savage
mood.
(They could not use them in that latitude).

In old New England homes their use is ended,
They hang with ribbon from the wall suspended,
They stood for so much comfort in the days
When all our heating came from log fires' blaze.

In frigid room our grandsire curled his toes
On toasted sheets, and covered up his nose,
Rather than warm our beds with heated metal,
We fill hot water bags from steaming kettle.
A bag may leak 'tis true (misfortune dire),
But never could it set the bed on fire.

Historic Table Linen.

Once table cloths and politics,
The manufacturers chose to mix—
Then party motto and design
Were woven into linen fine.
In warp and woof there live again
Insignia of the old campaign,
When banners bore these emblems queer,
A hut of logs and keg of beer—
Such fabric, connoisseurs invest,
With real, historic interest.
Depicted on a cloth's four corners
Barrels and bee hives share the honors.
The streets and parks of Washington
In Tyler's day, the sides adorn,
While in the damask centre field,
A screaming eagle grabs a shield,
Declaring, spite of feud and fuss,
Unum shall stand, *E pluribus*.

The Toasting Fork.

In Grandpa's dining room, as swift
Fell evening, I remember
How brands upon the hearth we'd lift,
And rake the glowing ember.
A toasting fork, with sharpened prongs
Hung by the chimney near the tongs.

Within that cheerful light we'd kneel,
Nor wanted lamp or candle.
And on the fork of burnished steel,
Held by its lengthy handle,
Such toast we made, done to a turn,
No smallest edge allowed to burn.

Those squares all hot, and brown, and thin,
Our elders laid, high piling
On plates, with butter melting in,
So fragrant and beguiling,
We felt rewarded by their charm
For scorched face and aching arm.



Pink Lustre.

No china is there one can buy
With old pink lustre ware to vie
So rarely this is found except
Some odd piece from a corner swept;
The china hunter has to muster
By slow degrees his peerless lustre.

Its decoration chiefly shows
House, tree, and fence all tinted rose,
Where walls stand on a crooked slant,
And roofs are at a dangerous cant.
What maid so careful you could trust her,
To lay a hand upon that lustre?

No art today its sheen can catch
Or just that perfect color match,
If some is yours, I must beseech
You, place it up far out of reach,
Where you alone may wield the duster.
And care for your belovèd lustre.



Jewelry of Past Generations.

Seven decades back, in Washington,
A Salem damsel, who would don
Her best, when she to functions went,
(Van Buren, then, was president).
At balls a topaz necklace wore,
'Twas sent to her from Baltimore.
With ear rings too, which matched, and pendant,
All sparkling with a fire transcendent—
And lastly, a ferronnière
To droop upon her forehead fair,
Their special beauty was, I think
The stones not yellow were, but pink.
Yet now they call (distinction cruel),
The topaz but a *semi-jewel*.

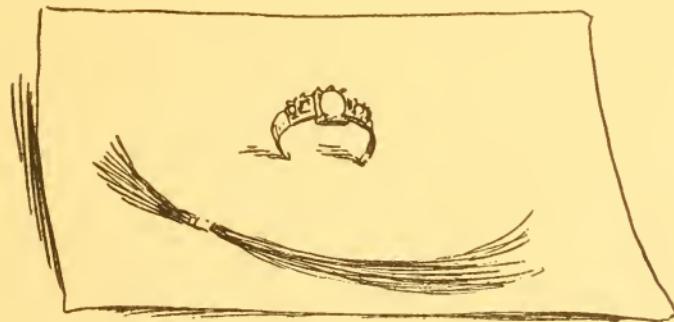
A bracelet decked with amethyst
Circled some white and slender wrist.

The necklaces festooned with pearls
Worn by our grandmothers, when girls



Survive. So frail our modern hands
Are awkward with the tiny strands.
A large pearl centres each rosette,
These all with smaller pearls are set.
While thread strung with minutest beads
From one part to another leads.

O'er one more relic must I linger,
A ring to fit a taper finger—
The opal with its changing sheen,
Sunk comfortably in between
Two modest stones of ruddy shade.
This, Henry Clay, a present made
(By sentimental ardor fired),
To someone whom he much admired,
Besides the ring, the little box
Contains a piece of "Henry's" locks.





The Patch Box.

A pink enameled box I own,
The kind they used for patches
When Beauties-on their cheeks would hide
Imaginary scratches.
Like all such dainty things antique.
Of romance past it seems to speak.

A maiden long ago received
This patch-box from her lover.
Behold, surrounded by a wreath
A legend on its cover.
“Though small this trifle may appear
Accept it, and my love sincere.”

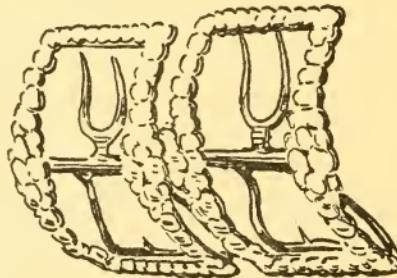
He did not send her flowers, for flowers
Must fade, the youth reflected,
To treasure all his spoken words
She could not be expected.
In Lethe's waves to be entombed,
The lover's vows so oft are doomed.

And so in fancy I can see
Him bring this rosy token,
It takes his message which will last,
(Unless the box is broken.)
Though small indeed, one inch across,
His heart and soul the words endorse.

She answered "yes" within the year
And always found his love sincere.

Knee Buckles.

Great Uncle Joe, in days of yore
At gala times these buckles wore,
They held secure below the knee
His breeches, fitting to a T.
With toe of kid, and satin heel
His feet skimmed through the tortuous reel.
His pigeon wing, and pirouette
The envy of the younger set;
As greeting all with smiles and chuckles,
He kept in evidence the buckles—
What if those jewels were but paste,
They shone to suit the gaudiest taste.
With thousand sparks they gleamed and glinted,
As up and down the hall he sprinted.



The Clock.

The chiming of the ancient clock
Drowns for a space its slow tick-tock.
Those eight strokes pierce the youthful heart
For school the hour has come to start.

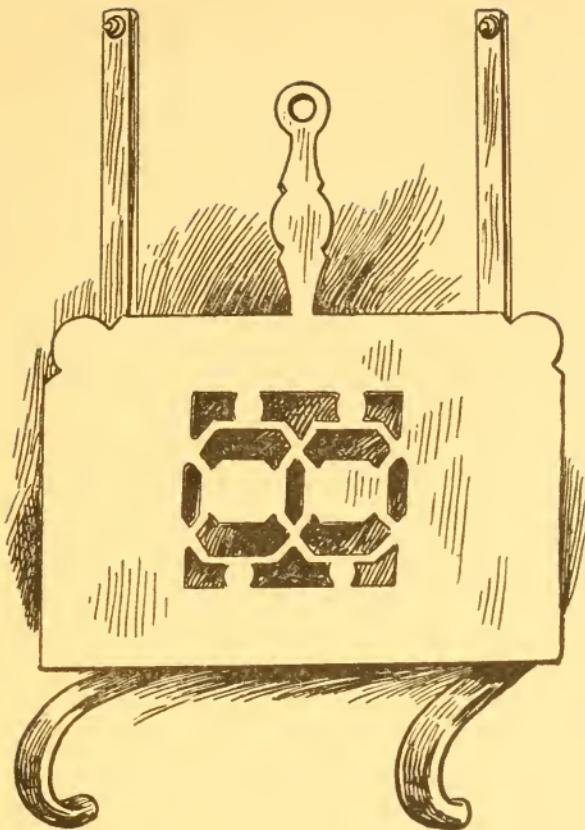
The mother, left at home, must stock
With fresh baked loaves her ample crock.
While working, never lonely she,
The time piece keeps her company.

Children and spouse, a hungry flock
Demand their food at twelve o'clock,
Just as they hear "one dozen" peal,
They're ready to begin the meal.

Towards twilight, having changed her frock
The door she opens, at the knock
Of village gossip, who prepares
To settle neighborhood affairs.

Their tongues let loose, they sit and rock—
The neighbor knits a crimson sock—
Her dish of gossip finished, she
E're leaving, takes a “dish of tea.”

The master glancing at the clock,
At nine secures the massive lock,
And when ten strokes smite loud and clear,
They fall upon no waking ear.



The Footman.

Detained, 'tis oft our dreary fate
To get a supper cold,
The Footman cared for comers late
In good old days of old—
By keeping hot, hooked on to fender
The cup of tea and biscuit tender.

Cup Plates.

Our Forbears, whom they called polite,
And used to good society, quite,
Would without straining any rule
In saucer pour their tea to cool.
Quaffing from which (as they would fain
The tablecloth protect from stain),
They placed their cups which might be wet
In "cup plates" for the purpose set.

Some of the small glass plates portray
The visage mild of Henry Clay,
On others, through the workman's craft
Stands Bunker Hill's memorial shaft.

Advancing taste set up a wail,
That such a fashion should prevail.
The plates were thrown aside forlorn,
Treated with carelessness and scorn,
Thus added value do they gain,
As coveted, but few remain.

finished Dec. 15
1908



Keep Watchful Eye
The Good Witch must
And rid her House
Each Day of dust.

Her Husband never
(If She be neat)
Wears undarned
Stockings,
On his Feet.

And his Approval
Is the Prize
To look for as
Her Needle flies.



*'Tis oft a treat aside to throw
Employment up-to-date, and sew
(Though be it much at eye sight's cost)
A sampler fine, with stitches crossed.*

Verses From Samplers.

I wish my wit and skill were ampler
That I might work a better sampler.
Who would not be a sloth, or slattern
Must make the Busy Bee her pattern.

Keep watchful eye
The good wife must
And rid her house
Each day of dust.

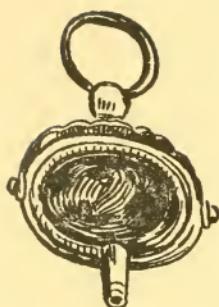
Her husband ne'er
(If she be neat),
Wears undarned stockings
On his feet.

And his approval
Is the prize,
To look for as
Her needle flies.



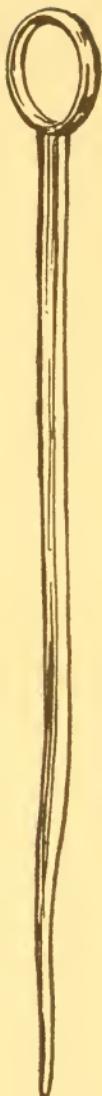
The Watch Key.

A piece of red carnelian, bound
With silver, edging it around,
According to a pattern old
Is made a watch's key to hold.



The man who purchased it when young,
Across his waistcoat, wore it hung—
And never let his watch run slow,
It pays to be on time, you know.
As varying moods beset his breast
Through life, when going to his rest,
Quite tenderly the key he'd twist
If looking toward romantic tryst
Again, the spring by jerks would wind
To ease a sore, indignant mind.

Thus track of time he kept, until
His life was run: In chamber still
Where watchers sat by shaded light,
The key lay all untouched one night.



A Silver Skewer.

Two ladies came from England's shores,
Quite late in life with all their stores,
Their manners quaint and gentle ways
Were redolent of earlier days.

A limit ever they ignored
As to the number which their board
At meal times would accommodate,
They welcomed all, however late.
These hostesses, who, you must know
Arrived here many years ago,
When "Articles de Luxe" were fewer
Possessed a handsome silver skewer.
Twelve inches long, and very stout,
With ring by which to pull it out,
It used to hold a turkey's wings
Confined, and other roasted things,
Not that the poor bird could escape
It only kept his comely shape—
By its removal at the feast,
The sage and onions were released.

This instrument employed of old
To draw together and to hold,
Is used entirely now to sever
(Thus "the old order changeth ever")—
For every day, it cuts the page
Of magazine, where bard and sage
Have stored for us a royal feast,
Which only waits to be released.

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